

2013

Youth Alliance

[ANNUAL REPORT]

Annual report for the activities of Youth Alliance for the period January – December 2013

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I. ABOUT YOUTH ALLIANCE

ID of Youth Alliance

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Youth Alliance Scope

Youth Alliance is an independent, non-governmental, non-political and non-profitable organization established in 1999. Our members are young people between 15 and 35, who work, study or express an interest in processes of Euro Atlantic integration of our country and SEE region in general. YAK is run by young people for young people, enabling a strong experience to all its stakeholders.

Axes of priorities:

- Active involvement of young people in decision-making processes at local, national and regional level;
- Contribution of young people in the Euro-Atlantic integration process of the SEE region;
- Encouraging and supporting young people to fully participate in society by providing them with new contacts, experiences and knowledge;
- Increasing the contribution of youth in the economic development of their local communities.

Goals:

- To promote new ways of expressing the views of young people from SEE vs. well-known political and uncooperative methods;
- Acceptance of the modern European values of young people from SEE and fostering mutual understanding between young people in different countries ;
- To promote youth activism in all issues of social life and to create a dynamic environment designed by active and enthusiastic participation of young people;
- Creation of conditions for faster and sustainable economic development;

How we work?

The organizational structure of Youth Alliance: Annual General Assembly (which is composed of all our members), Management Board, President of the Organization, Supervisory Board and Secretary of the organization. The Annual General Assembly is the highest authority responsible for the annual programme of the organization. The Management Board and the President of the organization are responsible for implementation of the organization. Annually we hold a General Assembly with all members of Youth Alliance Krusevo. The Management Board and the President of the organization are responsible for the decisions in the organization until next Annual General Assembly.

Our Values

Participation, democracy, equal opportunities, transparency, solidarity, tolerance, understanding, mutual support, cooperation.

Youth Alliance – UNESCO club

UNESCO club Krusevo from 2010 function as a part of Youth Alliance. The UNESCO club Krusevo shares the UNESCO ideal, seeks to disseminate it by undertaking activities directly inspired by those of UNESCO.

II. PROJECTS

II/1 Contacts for the Common Future – Let's meet our neighbor

- **General information**

In examining the civil society cooperation between Greece and Macedonia we are looking at it from a particular angle. The context in which cooperation between the civil societies of the two neighboring countries has developed is influenced by bilateral relations characterized by a mutual lack of trust, filled with confrontational spirit, prejudices and stereotypes. The undertaking of initiatives to foster relations between the two sides is therefore hindered. Contacts for civil society cooperation in the border regions of Macedonia and Greece are few and strained. Undertaking of isolated initiatives by individual citizens and organizations are not strong enough to contribute to the development of friendly relations, building of confidence and respect for human and cultural rights between Greece and the Macedonia.

A meaningful contribution, in the spirit of development of friendly relations, would be the strengthening of solid and stable structures for cooperation between the civil society of the two neighboring countries, in the direction of EU and Euro- Atlantic integration of SEE. Positive energy, spirit and willingness of young people open the path to the cooperation and dialogue, in the context of building good neighboring relations.

With the initiative "Contacts for the common Future - Let's meet our neighbor" we strived towards from Vision to Change, through enhancing sustainability of the cooperation between NGO's from Macedonia and Greece, development of cooperation between civil society and other sectors in society in both countries and their encouragement to be facilitators of a broad policy dialog. Achievements of the aims was provided by meeting of possibilities for cooperation, the direct identification of areas of common interest and display of the mutual benefit derived from efficient cross-border cooperation serving business, civil society and government. Project activities were distanced from nationalistic political choices and had adoption a more realistic approach, the two neighboring countries have similar interests and treading on similar paths. There is a common commitment to peace, stability and sustainable development of the SEE region. Moreover, it is hoped that through the building of a bilateral and regional co-operation, there will be a region's integration into Euro - Atlantic structures.

- **Activities**
 - Planning and preparation phase – **Preparatory seminar** – 09-11.03.2012, Krusevo, Macedonia
 - Phase "Exploring for a Common Future" - **two rounds of Study Visits** :

- I. Study visits in Greece in 4 cities - Florina, Edessa, Kastoria & Kilkis – 09 -13.05.2012.
- II. Study visits in FYR Macedonia in 4 cities – Ohrid, Bitola, Kavadarci & Strumica – 16 - 20.05.2012
- Phase “Sharing for a Common Future”:
- I. **Feedback seminar** – 01-03. 06. 2012, Struga, FYR Macedonia
- II. **Briefing workshop** - 20-21.10, Skopje, FYR Macedonia (during the Briefing workshop we had one Info day in Skopje)
- Phase “Shaping Common Future – **Follow up seminar** – 15-18.02.2013, Thessaloniki, Greece

- **Achievements**

Even a marathon starts with a single step. We started to run the C4CF marathon in 2010 and the Contacts for the Common Future – Lets meet our neighbor provided the necessary space for the most important elements of this initiative: creation of strong interpersonal relations between the young people from the both neighboring countries, exploration of the possibilities for cooperation, establishing good contacts with local communities, business sectors and civil society and organize concrete visible actions that would contribute to trust building and overcoming prejudices and stereotypes. This possibility was important and challenging. It was important because it opened the path to cooperation with our neighbors. But it was indeed challenging: during the planning, we identified the needs, elaborated a vision, planned the activities and then - during the implementation of it - we discovered new scenario, beyond our initial intuition. To ensure a constant composition of the participatory groups during this one year long lasting project made our work hard but extremely interesting. There were fifteen percent changes in the composition of the participatory groups during all project phases. This new scenario brought together no less than seventy youth workers, youth leaders and active young people in the Contact for the Common Future who all contributed in the project and now they are committed to building a common future. Having such a big group in the project is already an achievement in itself.

II/2 International Youth Conference “European Values for the Future of Southeastern European countries” - 2013

- **General information**

When Youth Alliance from Krusevo proposed the International Youth Conference “European values for the future of SEE countries” in 2003, our vision was this event to be the voice of young people in Southeast Europe, where young people will be encouraged and supported to be promoters of the European values in their countries. Since then, Youth Alliance with support of many partners, foundations and supporters is organizing the IYC “European values for the future of SEE countries”. In other words, we strongly believe in the International Youth Conference as a tool through which we empower, encourage, involve, represent, reach out and support young people to be leaders and creators of the European future of SEE region.

As in previous years, the 11th International Youth Conference brought together 60 youth leaders from South East Europe and Europe in Krusevo to discuss current issues and explore new approaches in youth policy and youth work across South East Europe and Europe in general. Organized in order to represent our common interests, we all together concluded that the young people in Southeastern Europe need European solutions to their needs and challenges and in the current uncertain political and social context that affects young people, we can be powerful catalysts for positive change and contributors of innovative solutions to today’s problems.

As we stated during the preparation of this year Conference, today, mobility, living and learning in a united Europe have become a given for many young people. Nevertheless, the younger generation particularly from countries engaged in the accession process to the European Union are currently feeling that Europe is a long way away or Europe is somewhere else, and this applies especially to the European Union. The topic of the International Youth Conference on “European Values for the future of SEE countries”, therefore is answering to the questions and doubts of young people on one hand, and on the other hand is bringing back their confidence in the European project. Moreover, this youth project is striving towards bringing the European Values closer to the young people for more than a decade.

The eleventh International Youth Conference took place traditionally in Krusevo, Republic of Macedonia from 19th to 23rd of September, 2013. The main issues brought up and discussed by experts and participants during the conference focused on three main areas: Challenges of young people from Southeast Europe today, Young people’s participation in politics and society and European integration of Western Balkans. Finally, we have no reservations to state that this opportunity for policymaking with young people, engaging with their realities and developing structured approaches to their main issues, created a laboratory where each aspect of one’s identity as a citizen, of a region, a country or the European Union fully was analyzed and explored. All involved stakeholders in the conference brought a general conclusion: Europe- that is us.

- **Program**

Day	Topic of the day
Day 1	Arrival and opening
Day 2	Challenges of SEE today
Day 3	Young people’s participation in politics and society - New instruments of democracy
Day 4	Conclusions, recommendations and future action planning
Day 5	Reviewing the conference

DAY 1, Thursday, 19.09.2013 - ARRIVAL AND OPENING

09 : 00 – 20 : 00	Arrival of the participants and registration
20:00 – 21 :00	Dinner
21 : 00 - 22 : 30	<p>Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Keynote address and opening of the conference</p> <p>Introduction to the conference, 2013</p> <p>Overview of the conference agenda by the international preparatory group</p> <p>(Plenary hall)</p>

22:30 – 00:00

Welcome evening

DAY 2, Friday, 20.09.2013 - CHALLENGES OF SEE TODAY

08:00 – 09:00	Breakfast		
09:00 – 09:30	Needs and expectations		
09:30 – 11:30	<p align="center">Structured dialogue as a bridge between young people and decision makers</p> <p align="center">Keynote speaker: Ms. Ana Cristina Zacornea (Romania) Moderator: Ms. Mihaela Bolohan (Romania)</p> <p align="center">The structured dialogue works well - or does it not?</p> <p align="center">Keynote address Q&A, discussion and interventions by participants Plenary session</p>		
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break and press briefing		
12:00 – 14:00	<p align="center">New bridges for the Balkans</p> <p align="center">Keynote speaker: Mr. Frank Morawietz (Germany) FGYO Initiative South-Eastern Europe Moderator: Mr. Tihomir Velikinac (Serbia)</p> <p align="center">The South Eastern Europe initiative of the Franco-German youth office</p> <p align="center">Q&A, discussion and interventions by participants</p> <p align="center">Panel discussion</p>		
14:30 – 16:00	Lunch break		
	Interactive workshops on: "Youth unemployment" 9 parallel workshops		
16:00 - 17:30	<p align="center">Youth work - responses to the economic crisis Facilitator: Biljana Stojceska (Macedonia)</p>	<p align="center">Affirm state of education or only a weak foundations Facilitator: Irena Kitanova (Macedonia)</p>	<p align="center">Dropouts - Go abroad no matter what? Facilitator: Ognen Jakasanovski (Macedonia)</p>
	<p align="center">Volunteering as a solution path to youth employment Facilitator: Tihomir Velikinac (Serbia)</p>	<p align="center">The structured dialogue on youth employment Facilitator: Mihaela Bolohan (Romania)</p>	<p align="center">Youth led social entrepreneurship – why? how? when? who? Facilitator: Omer Kaya (Turkey)</p>

	<p>Support to unemployed young people</p> <p>Facilitator: Kire Vasilev (Macedonia)</p>	<p>Non formal and informal learning - A contribution towards young people's personal development</p> <p>Facilitator: Thomas Leszke (Germany)</p>	<p>Consequences of youth unemployment: problems of today, an image of tomorrow</p> <p>Facilitator: Stefan Aleksic (Montenegro)</p>
	<p>Recommendations: for social change; for changes in the education system; for improving the position of young people on the labour market; for improving the support to unemployed young people.</p>		
17:30 – 17:45	Coffee break and breaking up into the working teams		
17:45 – 19:15	<p>Youth Unemployment – a view from within Professors from FES Academy (Germany) Moderator: Dr. Heinz Bongartz (Germany) Keynote address</p> <p>Q&A, discussion and interventions by participants</p> <p>Panel discussion</p>		
19:15 – 20:30	Space for dreams!		
20:30 – 21:30	Dinner – Intercultural dinner		
21:30	Evening event: Celebration to mark the 11th anniversary of International Youth Conference		

DAY 3, Saturday, 21.09.2013

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND SOCIETY

08:00 – 09:00	Breakfast
09:00 – 09:30	Group building activity

09:30 – 11:30	<p align="center">Young people and political (in)activism</p> <p align="center">Keynote speaker: <i>Mr. Ilias Antoniou</i> (Greece) Moderator: Mr. Thomas Leszke (Germany)</p> <p align="center"><i>Motions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Education of young people • Political apathy and carelessness among young people • Positive youth – New trends in Europe youth policy • Non formal education – The future of political education <p align="center">Panel discussion Q&A, discussion and interventions by participants</p>					
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break					
12:00 – 14:30	<p align="center">European integration of Western Balkans: From reconciliation to European future</p> <p align="center">Keynote speaker: <i>HE Gudrun Steinacker</i> Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Skopje Moderator: Mr. Omer Kaya (Turkey)</p> <p align="center"><i>Motions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Balkans: a future with Europe • The Western Balkans and the EU: ‘the hour of Europe’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Balkans as a European question <p align="center">Keynote address</p> <p align="center">Q&A, Discussion and Interventions by participants</p> <p align="center">Plenary session</p>					
14:30 – 16:00	Lunch break					
16:00 – 17:30	<p align="center"><<e-Participation & Youth << #Include <Tools; Processes; Policy></p> <p align="center">Keynote speaker: Mr. Tomislav Korman (Croatia) Head of Online Communication Department at the Government of the Republic of Croatia Moderator: Mr. Tihomir Velikinac (Serbia)</p> <p align="center"><i>Motions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On line activism – a modern European instrument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth, media and participation • Democratic innovation - Democratic citizenship <p align="center">Panel debate Q&A, discussion and interventions by participants</p>					
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee Break					
18:00 – 20:00	<p align="center">Interactive workshops on: “Young people’s participation in politics and society - New instruments of democracy” 6 parallel workshops</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="408 1935 1445 2047" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #00a0e3; color: white;">Tackling corruption in processes involving youth</td> <td style="background-color: #a0c0e3;">My right to Europe – Young people and EU citizenship</td> <td style="background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white;">Youth leadership, youth work and youth polices</td> </tr> </table>			Tackling corruption in processes involving youth	My right to Europe – Young people and EU citizenship	Youth leadership, youth work and youth polices
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	Facilitator: Stefan Aleksic (Montenegro)	Facilitator: Mihaela Bolohan (Romania)	Facilitator: Omer Kaya (Turkey)
	Discrimination of young people in the decision making process	Equal opportunities and diversity YOU (TH) ⇨ Empowered!	Respecting and valuing gender and generational differences
	Facilitator: Tihomir Velikinac (Serbia)	Facilitator: Thomas Leszke (Germany)	Facilitator: Kire Vasilev (Macedonia)
	Presentation of results		
20:00 – 21:30	Diner at a traditional restaurant in Krusevo		
21:30 – 00:00	Night in Krusevo		

DAY 4 - Sunday, 22.09.2013 - RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE ACTION

08:00 – 09:00	Breakfast		
09:00 – 09:30	Sketch stage		
09:30 – 11:30	Individual presentations of the participants		
	Moderator: Mr.Ognen Jakasanovski		
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break		
12:00 – 15:00	What needs to happen now?		
	Facilitators: Mr. Thomas Leszke, Mr. Tihomir Velikinac, Ms.Mihaela Bolohan		
	Action planning (individually)		
	What needs to happen now?		
	Facilitators: Mr. Thomas Leszke, Mr. Tihomir Velikinac, Mr. Mihaela Bolohan		
	Action planning (with others)		
	Thoughts on the future: European integration of the Western Balkans: From reconciliation to European future	Thoughts on the future: Youth unemployment	Thoughts on the future: Young people's participation in politics and society
	Presentations of the results from workgroups		
15:00 – 16:30	Lunch break		
16:30 – 20:00	Krusevo sightseeing		
20:00 – 21:30	Surprise dinner		
21:30 – 00:00	Surprise night		

DAY 5 Monday, 23.09.2013 - REVIEWING THE CONFERENCE AND DRAWING CONCLUSION

0 8 : 0 0 – 0 9 : 0 0	Breakfast
0 9 : 0 0 – 1 1 : 3 0	Summary of the conference: Reviewing the conference The general reporters' reflections on the International Youth Conference (The conference team)
1 1 : 3 0 – 1 2 : 0 0	Coffee break
1 2 : 0 0 – 1 3 : 3 0	Presentation of the final documents: Recommendations and proposals for future youth actions for promotion of European values among young people in Europe and particularly in SEE (Summary of the conference part II) (The conference team)
1 3 : 3 0 – 1 5 : 0 0	Lunch
1 5 : 0 0 –	Departure of participants

II/3 Youth Social Entrepreneurship in Action

- **General information**

The social entrepreneurship offers valuable possibilities for unlocking the potential of young people, initiating entrepreneurial ideas among them and empowering youth actions to tackle social problems, improve communities and people's life chances. **A variety of fields of youth action through the social entrepreneurship** was in the focus of the **Training Course "Youth Social Entrepreneurship in Action"**. The starting point was that social entrepreneurship offers a triple advantage: it offers innovative ways of introducing young people to the world of work, and even of creating youth employment, it can support active citizenship with a clear sense of 'social mission' and it helps social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

Specific **learning objectives** of the training project did include:

- Training of 33 prospective youth leaders/workers in the field of youth social entrepreneurship aiming to improve the participants' knowledge and competences to initiate and support social entrepreneurial spirit among young people;
- To increase understanding of the qualities of youth social entrepreneurship between the participants with special attention to opportunities for youth employment, active citizenship and social inclusion;
- To explore and promote the entrepreneurial potential of the 'Youth in Action' programme as a starting place for youth social entrepreneurship.

The participants — youth workers and leaders active in the field of youth unemployment — were offered a view of how to take advantage of social business opportunities, and were given some relevant skills. The programme provided a **hands-on knowledge and skills for stimulating and**

supporting of social entrepreneurial spirit between young people. Also the participants became more familiar with the qualities of the social entrepreneurship particularly with its opportunities for youth employment, active participation and social inclusion through the non-formal learning methods. The special added value of the Training Course was the provided opportunities by the experienced training team for **gaining knowledge and experience in creating low-cost social entrepreneurship projects** in the areas the participants chose — environment and sustainable development, education, intercultural collaboration, social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and rural development. The course examined the success factors in setting up social enterprises. And throughout, it encouraged participants to develop their sense of initiative and their capacities for analyzing and overcoming obstacles, and identifying and maximizing opportunities in the social sector.

The **one-week course took place in Krusevo in October 2013**, and was attended by **33 participants** aged between 18 and 32, from the **Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Macedonia**. It was hosted by Youth Alliance –Krusevo, an organization that supports young unemployed people and promotes social entrepreneurship and creative approaches in education, and the participating partners were all non-profit and non-governmental organisations providing non-formal learning opportunities to young people from different social and ethnic backgrounds.

The most important highlights of the TC “Youth Social Entrepreneurship in Action” were that: ‘I learned a lot about social entrepreneurship and had the chance to explore how to move from idea to action with social benefit!’ ‘The trainers changed my way of thinking, developed my imagination. It was first time I saw myself as an entrepreneur, and also this training gave me the courage to dare, to share and to think big things for a social and/or environmental purpose!’ ‘Youth are a resource, not a problem. Investing in youth is actually the best investment!’

Successfully concluding this training course, all involved stakeholders agreed that we should continue to invest in the knowledge and skills of young people in order they to think social and to act business.

- **Activities**

The project “Youth Social Entrepreneurship in Action” provided opportunity to the youth workers and leaders, participants of the training course, for expanding their understandings about the social entrepreneurship. Moreover, they were challenged to generate social business models, to write business plans based on the social needs and to evaluate marketing tools for promotion of their social business ideas. Aiming at implementation of high quality activities, the project was developed with active involvement of all stakeholders throughout 4 different project phases: Planning and preparation, Implementation of the Activity, Dissemination and Exploitation of results and Evaluation (including reflection on a follow up).

The project started with the **preparation activities for the Training Course**, we put stress on this phase as the key to success of the project. Throughout the preparation phase our approach was in a well planned and participative way, and all project promoters in order getting ready for the Training Course were conducted the following preparation activities: Group preparations for the travelling (travel arrangements, travel insurance, local transportation);Participants explorations and preparation of the topic of the TC (social entrepreneurship in the countries involved in the project; youth work and the social entrepreneurships; preparation of the presentations); Creating a FB platform for the participants to get to know each other before the Training Course; Activities for

promotion of the project. During the preparation phase the training team had several on line meetings in order to discuss and finally define the expectations for the event, to review the activity schedule/ work plan, to analyze the needs of the participants and get a good sense of the space allocated to us in the venue. Preparation activities undertaken by the host organization were: identification of a TC venue; preparation and sending practical information; collection of travel details from all participants; preparation Skype meeting with trainers and list of materials; sending invitation letters, local visibility actions and activities preceding the TC etc.

The culmination of all our preparation and planning activities has been seen during the **TC programme** itself. The seminar employed the methods of non-formal learning, encouraging the exchange of experience for the social business from different countries to alert the participants to opportunities they had not been aware of, along with theoretical and practical exercises and workshops, and simulations of social entrepreneurship challenges. Particular emphasize was given to the developing the competences of youth workers for promotion of the social entrepreneurs values among the young people. The participants acquired new capacities for counselling, and for supporting the creation and development of Youth Led Social Business in their own countries, so that social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills would be promoted among young people.

The seeds of visibility, dissemination and exploitation of the TC “Youth Social Entrepreneurship in Action” were sown as early as with the selection of the participants. In the same way as the programme was developed in partnership, we were all together, through promotion of the TC, cooperation with media, networking, multiplying experiences, follow up actions, involved in increasing of the project impact.

The **evaluation process** of the project involved several activities in the different phases of the project. Firstly through the process of preparation there were on line consultations about the on going process of selection procedure of participants, the process of preparation of groups and explorations on the topic of the Training Course. The Training Course was evaluated by the following sessions/tools: Participants Pre-questionnaires; Daily evening evaluation sessions, Reflection group of participants, Training team meeting, Interviews, Evaluation exercises, Reports, Participants Post-questionnaires. To the evaluation process contributed internal and external evaluation stakeholders.

- **Partners**

Youth Alliance – Krusevo, Macedonia; Vizion Integrues, Albania; UNITRA, Bosnia and Herzegovina; IRRSA, Bulgaria; JEF Hrvatska, Croatia; OENEF, Greece; Asociatia KASTA MORRELY, Romania; PROTECTA, Serbia; Art Nicomedia, Turkey; Youth NGO Iskra, Ukraine and AEGEE-Köln e.V, Germany.

II/4 Citizen in the first place

- **General information**

The main goal of the activities in the project “Citizen in the first place” was to involve the motivated young people in the local civic activism in order to increase their awareness that the development of the community depends directly from them and that they should be part of the change that they wish to see in their community. Also, we strived towards to change and to raise awareness among as many young people in Krusevo about the importance of civic activism for community development and that is their job and responsibility to strive for positive change in their community. The activities encouraged the young people to be involved in activities for finding creative solutions as a way to achieve their proposal ideas for the expected social changes. Taking into consideration that the

young people in Krusevo are very passive and the only form for social activism is the political activism we tried to show to them that very small steps can make big changes. Therefore was created team of young volunteers named "Cultural Youth Action" who were responsible for all activities in the project. In 2013 as outcome of the project was produced sets of postcards with motives from Krusevo.

- Activities

"Cultural Youth Action" as an philanthropic action of young enthusiasts and civic activists who were trying to prove that their heritage is a common responsibility of all of us and if we meet, nurture and act for its preservation that treasure will pass on our next generations. The size of enthusiasm in this action was that young people believed that by taking the initiative will encourage other young people to new actions for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in Krusevo. By this way of civil activism the young passive people will practice how to be productive for their community.

The objectives of the "Cultural Youth Action" were:

- Raising awareness among the young people in Krusevo about the importance of cultural heritage;
- Involvement of young people in the promotion and protection of cultural heritage, as an efficient way to get to know young people with their own culture;
- Encouraging young people to find creative solutions as a way to achieve their proposal ideas;
- Identifying the capacity of young people to foster and preserve cultural heritage through their own efforts.